

CONFIRMATION OF ANTONY JOHN BLINKEN

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the nomination of Antony J. Blinken to be U.S. Secretary of State.

Mr. Blinken has decades of experience in foreign policy, beginning in the early 1990s as the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for European and Canadian Affairs. He has since risen to senior foreign policy positions on Capitol Hill and in the executive branch, including as Democratic Staff Director on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and as Principal Deputy National Security Adviser and Deputy Secretary of State in the Obama administration. I have had occasion to work with him over the years and can testify to his professionalism, diligence, and good judgment.

Mr. Blinken faces an enormous task. The last 4 years have been rife with chaos, division, and ineffective unilateralism. Under the so-called slogan of "America First," President Trump turned his back on allies and emboldened our adversaries, leaving the United States weakened, vulnerable, and alone. Mr. Blinken must not only reverse the damage done by President Trump; he must reinvigorate U.S. leadership in a manner that meets the challenges we face today—from the existential threat of climate change, to a more aggressive and confrontational China.

To begin, Mr. Blinken must restore our alliances, rebuild our global partnerships, expand our commercial ties, and rejoin the critical international agreements and organizations recklessly abandoned by President Trump. Already President Biden has reversed Trump's Muslim ban, rejoined the Paris climate accords, and recommitted to the World Health Organization. In the coming months, Mr. Blinken must work with our allies to develop a united front to counter the threats posed by adversaries such as China, Russia, and Iran. He must reaffirm our commitment to NATO. He must reestablish U.S. leadership in providing development and humanitarian assistance around the world, reasserting U.S. values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

As importantly, Mr. Blinken must restore the State Department itself. The Trump administration routinely undermined and smeared our dedicated career foreign and civil service officers. Rebuilding the morale of our talented public servants will be imperative for the successful execution of our foreign policy.

Given the breadth of his knowledge and experience, I am confident Mr. Blinken is the right person to meet America's foreign policy challenges, and I support his confirmation as U.S. Secretary of State.

59TH INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I request to have printed in the CONGRESSIONAL

RECORD my full remarks delivered on January 20, 2021, at the 59th inaugural ceremonies.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Mr. President, Well, I should have known when Senator Klobuchar got involved, at least there would be a touch of snow up here this morning. Of all the things we considered, I don't think snow was on my agenda until I walked out the door a moment ago.

But thank you, Senator Klobuchar, and thanks to the other members of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Inauguration as we officially begin the 59th Inaugural Ceremony. I also want to thank the Joint Committee staff and our partners, particularly our security partners, for the way they have dealt with unprecedented circumstances.

When I chaired the Inauguration four years ago, I shared President Reagan's 1981 description of this event as commonplace and miraculous. Commonplace because we've done it every four years since 1789. Miraculous because we've done it every four years since 1789.

Americans have celebrated this moment during war, during depression, and now, during pandemic. Once again, all three branches of our government come together as the Constitution envisions. Once again, we renew our commitment to "Our Determined Democracy, Forging a More Perfect Union."

That theme for this Inauguration, "Our Determined Democracy, Forging a More Perfect Union," was announced by the Joint Committee before the election—with the belief that the United States can only fulfill its promise and set an example for others if we are always working to be better than we have been.

The Constitution established that determined democracy with its first three words, declaring the people as the source of the government. The Articles of Confederation hadn't done that. The Magna Carta hadn't done that. Only the Constitution says the government exists because the people are the source of the reason it exists. They immediately followed those first three words with the words "to form a more perfect Union." The founders did not say "to form a perfect Union." They did not claim that in our new country nothing would need to be improved. Fortunately, they understood that always working to be better would be the hallmark of a great democracy.

The freedoms we have today, the nation we have today, is not here just because it happened, and they aren't complete.

A great democracy, working through the successes and failures of our history, striving to be better than it had been. And we are more than we have been and we are less than we hope to be.

The assault on our Capitol at this very place just two weeks ago reminds us that a government designed to balance and check itself is both fragile and resilient.

During the last year, the pandemic challenged our free and open society and called for extraordinary determination and sacrifice—and still challenges us today. Meeting that challenge head on have been and are health care workers, scientists, first responders, essential frontline workers, and so many others we depend on in so many ways.

Today, we come to this moment. People all over the world, as we're here, are watching and will watch what we do here.

Our government comes together. The Congress and the Courts join the transition of executive responsibility.

One political party more pleased today, and on every inaugural day, than the other.

But this is not a moment of division. It's a moment of unification. A new administration begins and brings with it a new beginning. And with that our great national debate goes forward and a determined democracy will continue to be essential in pursuit of a more perfect Union and a better future for all Americans. What a privilege for me to join you today.

Thank you.

TRIBUTE TO CHAD METZLER

Mr. KING. Mr. President, if you ask 100 Americans what qualities they want in a public servant, I would bet there are a few common words that would come up. Smart. Dedicated. Bipartisan. Honest. Trustworthy. Humble. Simply put, they will describe Chad Metzler—my legislative director for the past 8 years and one of the finest public servants I have ever met. That is why today I rise with a heavy heart to wish Chad well as he prepares to embark on a new adventure.

Each of us in this body understands that the Senate's work is not entrusted solely to Senators. Our names may be on the door, but we can't claim successes on our own. Our staffs play a critical role in our efforts to navigate the complex challenges facing the Nation and serve the American people. That is why hiring the right people is one of the most important decisions any Senator makes. If a Senator is lucky, they will find staffers who have extensive experience and knowledge of the legislative process; who aren't afraid to challenge their boss's preconceived notions in the pursuit of better policy; who are kind, level-headed public servants; who are generous colleagues; who understand the importance of the faith placed in us by the American people and work every day to live up to this enormous responsibility. If a Senator is lucky, they will find staffers who check a few of those boxes. If they find someone who can do all of the above, they have hit the jackpot. When Chad Metzler joined my team as legislative director in 2013, I and the people of Maine hit the jackpot because he is all of those things and more.

Over the past 8 years, I have had the privilege to have Chad lead my legislative team. Sadly, good fortune only lasts for so long. As Chad transitions into a new, exciting opportunity, I am confident that he will continue to make vital contributions to the American people in his new role, but before he leaves us, I want to take a moment to reflect on all his contributions to the Senate and the country.

From my early days in the Senate, Chad's experience was invaluable. Prior to joining my office, he spent 17 years working for Senator Herb Kohl, from his home State of Wisconsin. Throughout that tenure, Chad spearheaded a number of important, varied responsibilities—from serving as the Senator's legislative director, to holding the position of staff director on the Senate Special Committee on Aging, to